

STATE OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-3, 5-10 and 12 were pending in the application. Claims 1, 5-7, and 9-10 were amended above, and Claim 12 was deleted.

REMARKS

At the outset, Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the time taken and courtesies extended in the telephonic interview of June 25, 2003. In the interview, the text of the claims was discussed, including the necessity for specific limitations within the claims drawn to the embodiments argued in the Office Action Response sent on February 26, 2003. Additionally, the relationship between the proposed, more specific language and the cited art was also discussed, wherein the Examiner agreed that the more specific language included in Claim 1 above did in fact define over the cited art. Applicant therefore prepared this Amendment After Final in order to prompt an Advisory Action from the Examiner, and to place the present application in condition for allowance.

In the last Office Action mailed April 29, 2003, the Examiner first objected to the drawings, then rejected Claims 5-7, 10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, and rejected Claims 1-3, and 7-10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S Patent No. 6,298,626, issued to Rudden (Rudden '626) in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,771,271, issued to Keel (Keel '626). Applicant continues to traverse the Examiner's rejections. In response, however, Applicant has deleted Claim 12 to address the Examiner's drawing objection, amended Claims 5-7 and 9-10 to amend the informalities therein, and amended Claim 1 to better define the claimed invention. These amendments should therefore place the present application in condition for allowance.

Claim 1, as amended above, clearly and specifically claims structure that defines over the prior art cited by the Examiner. Specifically, Claim 1 includes the limitations of both former

Claims 4 and 11, including the limitation that catch recess (72, 74, 76) comprises a plurality of connecting positions, as shown in Figs. 2-3 of the application. By including a plurality of connecting positions, the covering arrangement claimed and described in the present application can be used with a variety of roof lengths, without the need cut/alter the length of the covering parts.

The invention as claimed in Claim 1 is not taught, disclosed or even suggested by any of the prior art cited by the Examiner. Rudden '626 discloses a sliding panel for use in an exterior wall covering, which has a male-to-female engagement system for interconnection to other panels. Rudden '626, however, does not contemplate the variable-connection system claimed in Claim 1, where the relative positions of neighboring covering parts can be varied by using one of the plurality of connecting positions for the connecting recesses. In fact, Rudden '626 does not even suggest such a connection system, as the male-to-female system disclosed therein would be incompatible with such an idea.

Keel '271 fails to remedy this deficiency. Keel '271 discloses a clapboard assembly that is joined together using epoxy and sealant. The clapboards only include a single attachment point, and therefore do not contemplate the ability to vary the relative positions of the clapboards at all.


Based on the above, Applicant submits that Claim 1, as amended, clearly and specifically recites a covering arrangement that is not taught, disclosed or suggested by any of the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination with any other prior art. Further, the remaining claims in the application, namely Claims 2-3, and 5-10, should also be in condition for allowance, as they all depend from Claim 1. Therefore, reconsideration and passage to allowance of Claims 1-3 and 5-10 is respectfully requested.

Should anything further be required, a telephone call to the undersigned at (312) 226-1818 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: July 28, 2003




Jacob D. Koering
One of Applicant's Attorneys

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Patent Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on July 28, 2003.

Jacob D. Koering

Name of Applicant, assignee, applicant's attorney or Registered Representative



Signature